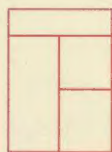


# HADJITHOMAS + JOREIGE

I'M THERE EVEN IF YOU  
DON'T SEE ME

CURATOR: MICHÈLE THÉRIAULT



September 1 – October 10, 2009

Latency is one of the concerns that informs the practice of artists **Joana Hadjithomas** and **Khalil Joreige** whether it be their films, videos, photographs, or indeed the texts and narratives they write. It suggests what cannot be fully present, restored, recovered or known, as if something is lying dormant and can potentially be awakened; it is the reminiscence of an image, of knowledge that is difficult to grasp. It also implies a quest, a continual search in which both artists and viewers participate. The works in this exhibition represent this quest's beginning, its process and its materialization.

This notion of latency is informed by Lebanon's recent History, its violence and destructiveness and the infinite complexity of its conflicts and their consequences. Hadjithomas and Joreige do not attempt to write that History, but rather to resist its totalizing forces by sounding its hidden, ignored, forgotten, secret or unclassifiable aspects so as to question it and explore "what divides the world today."

The diverse modes of presentation and representation of the image in their work is based on the use of the document (archival, popular or family) and fiction that does not place them in opposition to each other but rather examines their capacity to generate a discourse that questions the image by blurring their boundaries. This encounter sharpens the viewer's vision and mind.

This exhibition presents key works such as *Circle of Confusion* (1997) and *Khiyam 2000–2007* (2007) as well as recent pieces such as *War Trophies* (2006–2007) and *Faces* (2009) that have not been previously presented in North America. It is an opportunity to come to terms with a practice that creates a series of narratives that attempt to displace one's gaze and understanding, to share questions, to seek out "moments of truth."

– Michèle Thériault

The 11th edition of Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal is titled *The Spaces of the Image* and explores the questions of mechanisms and staging; due to the range of possibilities, photographers are increasingly called upon to become aware of their relationship with the exhibition. Production methods and viewing modalities, as integral parts of projects, exert a direct influence on the aesthetic of images. Gaëlle Morel, guest curator.

## WAYS OF THINKING

*Ways of Thinking* is designed for anyone interested in exploring contemporary art and its exhibition framework. It offers succinct and synthesized information on the exhibition's concept, the artists and the works featured. For the complete version of *Ways of Thinking* that includes bibliographic references, please see our website: [www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/](http://www.ellengallery.concordia.ca/2006/en/)



Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, *Latent Images*, 1997–2006.  
Photograph, courtesy of CRG Gallery, New York.



**Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige** live in Paris and Beirut where they were born in 1969. They produce films, documentaries and installations. They belong to a generation of artists, filmmakers, writers and intellectuals who have contributed to the rebirth of artistic culture in Beirut after 15 years of civil wars in a country that is still subject to profound instability.

**Circle of Confusion**

Photographic installation, 1997.  
Mirror, colour digital prints (3,000 pieces), ink inscriptions. Courtesy of the artists.  
Hadjithomas and Joreige have to deal with the lack of documentation on the history of Beirut, as well as with the often truncated accounts of its history. In *Circle of Confusion* (1997), they invite viewers to remove and scatter 3,000 fragments of an aerial photograph of the city. Reduced to a fragile and transitory surface, the image echoes the destruction, both historical and symbolic, of Beirut.  
→ EXPLORE the fragmentation of the image, how it refers to the city and what it reveals about it.

The work *Circle of Confusion* is produced and presented by the Gallery and Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal.

**Lasting Images**

Video projection, Super 8 film transferred to DVD, 2003. Courtesy of CRG Gallery, New York.  
*Lasting Images* is a 3 minute Super 8 film. It was shot in the 1980's by Khalil's uncle, who was kidnapped during the civil wars, just like 17,000 other Lebanese, and of whom nothing has been heard since. We found it in 2001 and sent it to the laboratory. Through a lot of colour correction, images appeared progressively through the whiteness of the film, as if they refused to disappear, and came back to haunt us.  
→ EXPLORE the importance of memory and remembering both in this work and in the wider history that it refers to, through the juxtaposition of radical circumstances with intangible, ethereal images.

**180 Seconds of Lasting Images**

Lambda print on paper, wood, Velcro, 4500 photograms, 2006. Courtesy of CRG Gallery, New York.  
*180 seconds of Lasting Images* is a work derived from the video installation *Lasting Images*, based on the Super 8 film of 3 minutes (180 seconds). We printed every frame of the film. Each one is treated as a separate entity, cut out and placed on a spiral forming a mosaic of 4500 vignettes. Each photogram, reduced to a size of 4 x 6 cm, is stuck to a Velcro strip.  
→ EXPLORE the origins of the images that make up this work and the organizing principles that are applied to them.

**Latent Images**

Part three of the project "Wonder Beirut".  
Diasac mounted photographs and Lambda prints on aluminum, 1997–2006 (English version).  
Courtesy of CRG Gallery, New York.  
Withdrawing our images from the stream, that is how this project began. Having accumulated undeveloped rolls of film over the years, we decided to keep them in drawers, to date them and to list them in a notebook supposedly written by a fictitious character named Abdallah Farah. These latent images form a kind of diary about family and sentimental life, photographic research and the highly eventful political and social history of contemporary Lebanon.  
→ EXPLORE notions of memory, narrative, and fiction and the ways in which these co-exist and interact with each other in this work.

**Faces**

Lambda prints mounted on aluminum, 2009.  
Co-produced by the Sharjah Biennale, SB9.  
Courtesy of Galerie In Situ / Fabienne Leclerc, Paris.  
Since the beginning of the civil wars, posters have covered the walls of the city. They are images of men, martyrs who died tragically, while fighting or on mission, or who were political figures and were murdered. For years, we have been photographing the posters of martyrs belonging to different parties, religions or creeds, in various regions of the country, from south to north. But we only select posters greatly deteriorated by time.  
→ EXPLORE the ways in which *Faces* addresses questions of existence and reality, martyrdom, commemoration and forgetting.

**War Trophies**

9 photographic prints on barium paper, 2006–2007. Courtesy of Galerie In Situ / Fabienne Leclerc, Paris.  
A series of photographs showing military vehicles abandoned when Israel withdrew from south Lebanon in 2000. These "war trophies" were temporarily exhibited in the camp-museum of Khiam when they were destroyed once again during the July 2006 war. They cause a temporal shift: they are the indicators of another war, the witnesses and victims of a new one.  
→ EXPLORE the notion of the "trophy" and how it applies to this work.

**Khiam 2000–2007**

Dual monitor installation, headphones  
52 min. each, 1999–2007 (English subtitles).  
Courtesy of the artists.  
The video installation *Khiam 2000–2007* is an experiment on narrative, on how, through words, the image builds up gradually on the principle of evocation. It is made up of two films, including accounts by six former detainees of the Khiam detention center, shot over an interval of eight years and according to the same set-up.  
→ EXPLORE the ways in which memory, history, and words each contribute to a process of representing and rebuilding Khiam.

**The Lost Film**

DV CAM transferred to DVD, 42 min., 2003 (English subtitles).  
A copy of our first feature film disappeared in Yemen, on the day of the tenth anniversary of the reunification of North and South. A year later we are there, following the trace of the lost film. An enquiry that takes us from Sana'a to Aden, a personal quest centred on the image and on our status as filmmakers in this part of the world . . .  
→ EXPLORE the process of investigation that the image undergoes and the simultaneous construction of a narrative and making of a film.



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Conseil des Arts  
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Canada Council  
for the Arts

PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE *FREDERICK AND MARY KAY LOWY ART EDUCATION FUND*.

THE LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY'S CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITION PROGRAM

IS SUPPORTED BY THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS.